

Newsletter

NEW SOUTH WALES WOMEN'S INTER-CHURCH COUNCIL (State Unit of Australian Church Women)

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The first meeting of the Women's Inter-Church Council for 1968 was a most informative and profitable one. Representatives of ten Branches or inter-church groups were present - most of the other 49 centres invited were not able to attend because of distance. Mainly for the benefit of the absent ones, we have collated the information given at the meeting and it forms the substance of this Newsletter.

At the meeting, the Promotion Committee formed a panel and each member presented a particular feature. Then there was time for reporting and discussion.

Brief History With 1968 comes the 30th Anniversary of the formation of the N.S.W. Women's Inter-Church Council. Foundation members represented the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches and the Churches of Christ. Later the Baptist, Lutheran, Church of England, Salvation Army and the Society of Friends accepted the invitation to affiliate. Each denomination may appoint eight representatives to the Council, and in addition, the Y.W.C.A. appoints two.

The Council established and operated "Wybalena" Hostel at Burwood for students and business girls until December 1966, when changing conditions and needs resulted in the decision to sell. The capital is invested pending its application to another project.

Relationship to Australian Church Women. For many years most States have had a Women's Inter-Church Council and since 1948 the idea of a federal co-ordinating body has been discussed, but it was not until the Council accepted the invitation of the Interim Committee of Australian Church Women to become the State Unit of A.C.W. that an official link was forged. The Council is still autonomous but it subscribes to the aim of A.C.W., supports its projects and fosters the observance of the Special Days.

For many reasons a federal co-ordinating body was desirable but the invitations to appoint Australian representatives to international and regional conferences emphasised the need. Mrs. Beales represented Australia at the Asian Churchwomen's Conference in 1962 in Thailand at her own expense, but in 1966 A.C.W. was a reality and Mrs. Badger was elected at the National Committee Meeting and sent with funds contributed by the women of the Australian churches. In 1967, in response to an invitation to an Ecumenical Conference in Taize, France, A.C.W. appointed Head Deaconess M. Andrews and Mrs. A. Dougan who were both in Europe at the time of the Conference, to represent us.

A.C.W. has published two study books, "Saints Alive" and "Church Worship" for the use of women's, mixed or youth groups, and also is promoting "Eve, Where Art Thou?", a report and study on the role of women in the church, published by the Committee on Co-operation of Men and Women in the Church, Family and Society.

Projects. Both projects express the international outlook of A.C.W.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN originated in Asia and is administered by the Asian Churchwomen's Conference. Women all over the world share in the Fellowship when each month they put aside the least coin of their currency to symbolise the prayer they have offered for reconciliation of individuals and nations. The thousands of dollars incidentally raised are used to promote reconciliation (including the cost of the Asian Churchwomen's Conference itself). Each of the six continents have received grants from the Fellowship. Australia received one for work with aboriginal girls and another \$1,000 will come in 1968 for work amongst migrant youth. Note the emphasis on Least Coin; all women, rich or poor, can share equally.

THE WINIFRED KIEK SCHOLARSHIP Fund, supported by offerings on Fellowship Day, brings Christian women from other countries to Australia for further study to help them in their work and to foster friendship and understanding between nations. Miss Connie Tan of Indonesia is a social worker who much appreciated the extra training she was able to get here in 1965 and Miss Sabita Swarup, an Indian lass from Fiji, since her return home, has been administrative secretary of the Methodist Hospital at Ba, a post formerly always held by a member of the mission staff.

This year a Papuan young woman who is a trained teacher, Jackie Kini, will be brought to Australia to do leadership training in the Girls' Brigade. You are invited to the meeting of the W.I.C.C. at Bible House on Friday, 28th June at 10.30 a.m. when a speaker from the Girls' Brigade will tell of its work and the plans for the scholarship holder.

Special Days. For many years the N.S.W. Women's Inter-Church Council has observed World Community Day in Sydney, but with the advent of A.C.W., it follows the same order of service as the other Australian States and the service is held in many centres instead of the one. The theme is usually a subject of world wide concern and the offering is usually related to the theme, both being decided upon by the National Committee or the Working Committee of A.C.W. In 1968 (Human Rights Year) the theme will be Human Rights and the worship service and study questions are being prepared by the Presbyterian Women's Association of Australia. World Community Day will be observed on Friday, 25th October. At the W.C.D. services, the Least Coins are gathered together and dedicated.

Fellowship Day, which has been observed in the seventy branches of the Victorian W.I.C.C. for many years is now nation-wide and is observed in the various centres in N.S.W. Here the accent is on "fellowship" and the local community, but the offering supports the Winifred Kiek Scholarship Fund. For 1968, the Tasmanian State Unit is preparing the order of service and study on "Behold I make all things new" (Revelations 21.5). This is the theme chosen for the Fourth World Assembly of Churches at Uppsala, Sweden, in July this year.

The 1968 National Committee Meeting recommended that to derive the benefit of meeting on the "same day" throughout the nation, Fellowship Day be observed where possible on the last Wednesday in July (the day traditionally set aside by Victoria) and World Community Day on the last Friday in October. Unless firm plans have already been made by your group, we recommend that these dates be used, i.e.

Fellowship Day	Wed. 31st July, 1968
World Community Day	Fri. 25th October, 1968

When centres do not observe both F.D. and W.C.D. as well as the Women's World Day of Prayer, on an inter-church basis, it is recommended that the orders of service be supplied to the individual Churches for possible use at regular meetings.

Discussion groups should be held instead of a speaker at the special days, because it is in this encounter of women from the different Churches in small groups that the real work of promoting friendship and co-operation is done.

Local Groups

The value of local groups or "Inter-Church Fellowships" cannot be over-emphasised. A group of like-minded women at the State level is a fine thing and much can be done by them, but they can best fulfil the aim of the W.I.C.C. "to promote friendship and co-operation between the women of the various branches of the Christian Church and to provide an avenue whereby they may unitedly serve the Kingdom of God" by assisting and encouraging the formation of local Branches of the Council.

Literature and assistance are available from the Council and its Promotion Committee. If there is no Inter-Church Fellowship in your district linked with the W.I.C.C., please contact us for further information.

The Council thanks you for your support and participation in its programme and prays that God will bless you abundantly as you seek to strengthen the Christian life and witness of local Church women.